

Egremont Housing Committee Minutes

April 15, 2021

Meeting Held via ZOOM

In Attendance:

Committee Members: Joan Goodkind, Fred Gordon, Mark Holmes, Craig Barnum

Guests: Richard Stanley CDCSB, Jim Harwood CDCSB, Allison Marchese CDCSB

Meeting called to order by Joan Goodkind at 5:05 p.m.

The March 18, 2021, minutes were approved.

Status of Request For Proposal for Affordable Housing Near Transfer Station Site

The RFP draft was sent to CDCSB, Habitat for Humanity, Construct, Inc. and Housing Committee Members for prior to the meeting for comments.

The Housing Committee members present believed the RFP was well constructed and may need some minor refinements as we move from draft to final form.

June Wolfe, Construct, Inc. believes the RFP was well done.

Comments from those representing CDCSB centered on the RFP wording, which limits the Responders to affordable home ownership, and therefore does not include consideration for affordable rental housing. Jim assumed the RFP would seek both rental and home ownership developers and, again, emphasized the importance of securing funds, perhaps through bonding, which currently offers very attractive interest rates.

CDCSB presented the strengths they bring to developing low to moderate income rental housing in the region. Through partnerships with Wayfinders a subsidiary of MBL, CDCSB secures government financing and budgeting needs for their projects. For ongoing property management they partner with Berkshire Housing Services, Inc. in Pittsfield.

Egremont Housing Committee Minutes

Jim believes rental housing provides more control to the operator of the development. He also confirmed that, at this time, the CDCSB has not developed affordable home ownership and mentioned there is little, if any, government funding for affordable home ownership.

In any event, CDCSB is willing to assist the Housing Committee in developing affordable housing in a manner which the Committee deems most appropriate. Allison mentioned the CDCSB would like to receive the RFP and respond in a way they deem most appropriate. CDCSB will regroup and discuss next steps.

Craig, reiterated his belief that a gap exists for workforce housing, which includes up to 120% of Area Medium Income (AMI). However, he understands the limitations in building affordable housing and is comfortable with potential home owners qualifying with 60% to 100% of AMI. Joan mentioned that Berkshire Regional Housing Authority (BRHA) has stressed the need for housing up to 100% of AMI. The Housing Committee is advocating for a higher percentage of AMI, because, unlike Great Barrington, Egremont does not offer walkability to needed services such as grocery shopping or mass transit.

Fred mentioned the RFP prepared by the Housing Committee recognizes the preference of Select Board Members and citizen discussions. The Committee understands there may be little, if any, government assistance in meeting home ownership development needs.

Also discussed was the Select Board's decision to withdraw, from the Town Warrant an article to fund \$9,975, for site development, a wetlands study, grading, stormwater and utility plan along with a pre-development meeting with the Select Board.

Both Richard Stanley and Craig Barnum offered some financial support for the site development based on the voters' decision and any shortfall in raising the \$9,975.

The Housing Committee made a motion to send the first draft of the RFP to the Select Board. The motion passed.

The next meeting date is to be determined.

Egremont Housing Committee Minutes

Respectively submitted,
Fred Gordon